585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her hand. Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a [533] female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Everyone admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a [302] flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the [481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

881 festival of the sheep كومنش , the little soli girls, those chosen
857 for the next circumcision, go with their still unmarried older sisters
to thank the elders for the honor which has been done them. In the
[53] evening, at nightfall, they visit the families and in a nasal song
recall the glories of their ancestors. They also have the most flattering
words for those still living, and it all ends with this plea: "We are
soli and haven't a penny! On the tenth day of the next moon we must
offer you a fine "couscous" with very small grains, the basi, and we
want a good sauce. Help us in this, I beg you, we are soli without
a penny."

The songs of the soli remind the old men and women of their
881 younger days, the days of their youth, and they run to the granary,
857 search the gourds that they use as cupboards, unlace the long roll of
• 481 close-packed straw where the cowrie shells are piled, and the young
people leave triumphantly, rich in cowrie shells, millet, and decayed
fish. The proceeds of the quest are entrusted to the oldest of the
soli, and, on the second day of the festival of the sheep, our belles
gather, grind furiously, and provide the whole village with its ration,
basi kili, which is the name of the festival.

881 On the stroke of noon and even before, everybody is fed and is
eagerly tasting the sorghum /sic/ beer, d'lo, and the soli girls run
from one house to another to gather the leftovers from the feast. They
do it hurriedly, eagerly, and feverishly, for they are impatient to
perform their great religious, public, and solemn act, and at the
soli kili basi they are the cooks and servants of the spirits.

The latter /spirits/ stay at the outskirts of villages, invisible,
and drag the soles of their feet along the paths of yawn as they crouch
/177/ at the crossroads. The songs of happiness, the cries of joy,
the hiccups of the drinkers, and the deafening noise of the bass drums
split their eardrums, the scent of decayed fish swells their nostrils,
and no doubt, between two sighs, as they lick their lips with their
tongues, they say to themselves in a murmur which the wind carries
away: "Oh! the gluttons, they are forgetting us!"

But not at all -- they are remembered! A little soli girl smears
her face, breasts, and back with milk, ashes, also and with other
things whose names I do not know; she makes herself hideous to behold,